

**From:** Dumb Az  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/21/02 9:42pm  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

I am, more or less, an average consumer. I have a personal computer, (obviously) and the following Microsoft products listed from memory: Windows XP, Flight Simulator 98, Age of Empires, Sidewinder joystick, and Streets & Trips 2001. I and others in my family have purchased these products of our own respective free-wills. Although the others aren't available to comment as I write this, I for one have been pleased with these products.

Nobody has ever forced me to either purchase or not purchase a single thing. Microsoft has been no exception. I have never seen any of the coercive force alleged by Microsoft's denouncers. In fact, it is because of this lack of coercion that I DO NOT subscribe to MSN. Instead, I subscribe to a locally based internet provider. Nor have I bought more recent versions of "Flight Simulator" as I don't see the changes as being significant enough to warrant the purchase. How could this be possible if Microsoft was forcing or manipulating people like me, as according to anti-trust proponents?

I find it insulting to hear Microsoft bashers as well as anti-capitalists characterize people like me as helpless victims who cannot choose what software to buy. This implies that we're mindless pawns, completely lacking of anything resembling free-will. I personally find this to be nothing less than a slap in the face.

The very idea that a company like Microsoft can be punished for being successful in the United States of America (of all places) threatens my own future. I am an aspiring software developer myself, hoping to found my own privately owned company. Although I plan to focus on creating entertainment software only, I still see the fate of Microsoft in the anti-trust suits as being a precursor to my own fate. Remember: it was not consumers or Microsoft's partners who started the anti-trust case, but Microsoft's competitors. If I were to become very successful in my future venture, what would happen to me if a competitor who wasn't doing as well decided to accuse me of anti-trust violations?

Microsoft competed vigorously in order to be the best. Yet, that is considered anti-competitive, implying that "competitive" means sacrificing one's own interests in order to allow competitors to win occasionally. If that's true, why does nobody apply the same logic to athletic competitions?

It is supposed to be the duty of the United States government to protect each person's rights to life, liberty, and property. To punish Microsoft simply for the sake of whiny competitors is a violation of property rights. It is also a shameful betrayal of the constitutionally enshrined right to the pursuit of happiness, for if someone is punished for attaining what they pursued, (in Bill Gate's case, a software corporation of legendary success) where will it end?

A self-made man like Bill Gates, (and hopefully me too someday) who became successful by offering preferable products and services, deserves whatever money people willingly give in exchange for said products and services. The uncoerced choice of each individual by their own free-will is the American dream, as opposed to edicts of sacrifice to those whose goods weren't chosen by said free-will.

Sincerely,

Mitchell A. Gyde

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